

TOMMY'S RESOLUTIONS

WAS the last of December, and Tommy was trying to remain wide awake while the Old Year was dying:

But his eyes fell to winking, and lest he should doze, he shut them a moment to gain that repose of mind and of body, important to keep at midnight, when watching while other boys sleep.

Now Tommy was not a courageous young chap, and his hair stood on end as he heard a loud rap on a picture, and saw coming right through the frame a fantastic procession of blind folk and lame.

They limped to his side, and poor Tom stood aghast, as he heard them exclaim: "We have found you at last!"

We're the year's resolutions—you thought we were good when you made us and left us to grow as we could. And 'tis right you should know 'tis entirely your fault that we stoop, are one-sided, and withered and halt."

"Yes," said one who was cross-eyed, "I'm fast growing blind because you've oft failed to be pleasant and kind."

"And I," said another, "must lean on a crutch because your quick temper goes off at a touch."

"And I am ill-shaped and deformed," cried a third, "because you've not always been true to your word."

So each one accused him of being to blame, and Tom, blushing and frightened, was covered with shame.

Then one little man, who was bent almost double, and who looked disappointed and worn out with trouble

(Twas a good resolution which Tommy had made that never for him should a meal be delayed),

With a voice that was cracked and a manner precise, said kindly: "My friend, here's a bit of advice:

What's worth doing at all should be always well done; Resolutions, if kept, are habits begun, And if you again and again persevere

To put us in practice each day of the year, You'll find that in time we'll grow shapely and strong."

That we'll help you to honor and hold you from wrong."

Here the clock pealed out twelve, but before the last stroke, the dream folk had vanished, and Tommy awoke;

He rubbed his eyes smartly, and vowed he'd remember His good resolutions until next December.

If he does, with the practice that every day gives, He'll form habits to bless him as long as he lives.

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The tall man swiftly turned, gave an exclamation of surprise, and was greeted by a hearty laugh from Tom.

"Prof. Vaughn!"

"My young friend, Tom—and Miss Aimee, also! Well, well—who would have thought of meeting you two in this part of the town to-night! May I ask what brought you here?"

"Just what brought you, professor, apparently!" laughed Tom. "And then this sister of mine has a fondness for seeking 'the spirit of Merry Christmas,' as she calls it!"

"And apparently she has found it," said the professor, smiling, while Aimee's eyes twinkled and her lips twitched with merriment at the way in which the professor's hand remained closed, as if it contained some treasure.

They walked along together. The professor evidently knew this part of the city well. He had many stories, droll and pathetic, to tell of customs of which they knew nothing, and of stranger customs still, which were practiced in the poorer parts of certain cities abroad.

Aimee listened with delight, while her bright eyes lost nothing of what was going on about her. She emptied her jacket pocket, too, to its last small coin, and so dexterously that the professor never once saw what she was doing, or, at least, that was what Aimee thought.

He accompanied them to their own door, but would not go in. "No, no—

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"O learned man, though you are wise, You oft need help—as one sane eyes—"

he read.

"Professor, you need mine, I know—Take me, I'm yours—with you I'd go! But should you leave me now, too late You'll feel regret—as sure as fate! My riddle you can't read? Then look—You'll find the answer in this book!"

A ripple of laughter sounded through the room.

"What can it be? It suggests a better half!" said one.

"A wife!"

"A housewife, truly!" exclaimed Mrs. Desmond, as the professor awkwardly opened his little package. "Well thought of, Aimee! A useful little article for any bachelor!"

So the evening passed merrily, and the last thing the professor's eyes rested upon, as he bade the family good night, was Aimee's lovely, laughing face.

And the last thing the professor's bewildered eyes rested upon, in his own room long after midnight, was a little photograph which he had found in a pocket of the housewife—a picture of Aimee's lovely face!

The professor was sorely puzzled. Had Aimee given him her likeness—unasked—or had the photograph slipped in by accident? What did the doggerel say?

"O learned man, though you are wise, You oft need help—as one sane eyes—"

"I do need help!" he said, "and truly, I have been blind—till now!"

"Professor, you need mine, I know—Take me, I'm yours—with you I'd go!"

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man!" thought Aimee, though wisely she did not put her thought in words.

The interview ended as such interviews usually end. And the professor, when he went away, carried with him a heavy heart—and the little photograph of Aimee's lovely face.

It was a strange thing, but Aimee could not for one moment forget the professor's words: "I love you. I cannot live—happily—without you!"

They rang in her ears, and his face—as it had been when he said those words—haunted her day and night through all the round of holiday gaieties which followed, though during those days she saw him no more.

She did not desire to see him, yet unconsciously at first—she came to contrast him, his manner, his mode of speech, with every man she met. And each of these she ranked in proportion as they approached or fell below the professor's level.

So New Year's eve came, and midnight found Aimee and Tom with a party of their friends, watching the old year depart.

Some one had been reciting Tennyson's "Death of the Old Year." And the words,

"He gave me a friend and a true, true love, And the New Year will take 'em away," struck Aimee as ominous. They echoed through her dreams all night, and they came back to her next morning when she took up the paper and read of an accident which had occurred on a trolley the night before, in which Prof. Robert Vaughn had been injured so seriously that his death was momentarily expected.

Then it was that the truth was revealed to her, and her heart echoed the professor's own words: "I love you. I cannot live—happily—without you!"

The family were so concerned over the bad news of their friend that Aimee's face was not noticed.

Nor did it seem strange or unusual to them when she went out alone to the early service at the church.

Aimee wanted to be alone with her secret and her sorrow. The holy words to which she listened made her more calm. And when the service was ended she walked on to the street where she knew the professor lived. She would pass the door, and if he were already gone—there would surely be some sign by which she would know—the worst.

But she saw no sign, and, though she dared not hope, she paused and breathed a little inarticulate prayer.

The door above suddenly opened and shut again, and the tall figure of a man came swiftly down the steps.

"Aimee—Miss Aimee—you!"

"Oh, professor! Then—you are not dead!"

He looked searchingly into her pitiful, white, lovely face.

"Professor?" he queried.

"Robert!" she breathed, with a little sob.

"Thank Heaven! No, I am not dead!" he said, cheerily, tucking her unresisting hand within his arm with a confident air of possession.

"That part of the account was all a mistake—but a blessed mistake, my Aimee—for I believe I have that to thank for giving you to me—and making this the happiest New Year of my life!"—Judith Spencer, in Ladies' World, New York.

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IN A PEANUT SHELL.

Shelled peanuts contain from 30 to 50 per cent. of oil.

In 1899 some 80,000 tons of peanuts were used in Marseilles alone for oil-making.

Of the 4,000,000 bushels of peanuts raised in this country 3,000,000 bushels are used as roasted peanuts.

It is quite possible that the highly nutritious peanut product of our southern fields may come to be used in more ways than at present, and especially in combination with other food materials.

Roasted peanut, ground into an oily meal and generally mixed with water to the consistency of butter, has been put on the market and is used to spread on bread. There are those who like its flavor when it is fresh.

When the oil has been pressed from the ground peanut the mass remaining, called oilcake, is used for fattening cattle. Some experiments have also been made as to its food value for human beings. Oilcake contains 47 per cent. of protein and 9 per cent. of fat and starch and costs about 5 cents a pound.

At present the American peanut crop is not large enough to more than supply the roaster and confectioner, hence the pressing of oil from the peanut has never become established here, but in Europe large quantities of the African-raised nut are used for this purpose.

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THE PROFESSOR'S PRESENTS.

COME out and see how 'the other half' spends Christmas eve," said Tom.

"Come out and inhale the spirit of Christmas in the keen frosty air!" said Aimee. And so they sallied forth.

They were soon on that side of the town where the poorer classes dwell, and where to-night the curbs were lined with booths lit up by flaring torches, and the vendors were selling cheap toys, fruits, candies, evergreens and all sorts of articles, in opposition to the long rows of attractively lighted and decorated shops.</